

# Briefly noted

News in the [January 10, 2006](#) issue

**Lutheran World Relief** has received a \$640,104 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help nomadic communities in Niger avert food crises through new approaches that help bring vulnerable populations back from the brink of hunger. The 18-month grant will support a project in the Dakoro region of Niger, working with nomadic pastoralists—communities that depend on livestock raising as their only livelihood—to help them both improve household nutrition and reduce the risk of food shortages. Drought, locust swarms and economic shocks have led to suffering not seen in 30 years. “We can’t reverse the problems that caused this year’s crisis,” said LWR president Kathryn Wolford, “but we can make a significant impact.”

**The Roman Catholic bishops** of England and Wales have warned the Church of England that if it approves of women bishops it will not only make difficulties for ecumenical cooperation but also take an “intolerable” risk of destabilizing both the Church of England and the whole Anglican Communion. The Church of England decided in 1992 to allow the ordination of women to the priesthood, and its first women priests were ordained in 1994. It is now considering whether to allow women to become bishops, with a debate expected at its general synod in February. Following that debate, draft legislation to allow women bishops will be drawn up and presented to the synod. The chief sticking point is how the Church of England will accommodate those members who do not recognize women priests and who rely on the “flying bishops” that have been appointed to look after those parishes that will not accept women priests.

**Christian churches** and Muslim leaders in Britain have welcomed a decision by the British government to drop part of proposed anti-terror laws which would have enabled the police to close places of worship linked to extremism. “We thought it a disproportionate response to a problem that could better be tackled in other ways,” said Anglican bishop Tom Butler of Southwark in London, welcoming the December 15 announcement by British interior minister Charles Clarke. The proposal was originally part of a plan to fight terrorism developed in the wake of the July 7 London bombings. Under the proposal, police would have been able to seek a court order for

the temporary closure of a place of worship if extremist behavior or terrorist activity was believed to be taking place. Welcoming the decision, United Reformed Church spokesman David Lawrence said that there is “existing legal provision covering people who seek to promote terror.”